

# Authors

**AUTHOR PANEL**  
Saturday Oct. 23 @ 2:00 PM | Del Rey Room



**Alicia Lanier**  
Author,  
"My Unspeakable Loss: A Birthmother's Memoir About Adoption Secrecy"



**Dawn Hogan**  
Author,  
"Unbroken Bonds"



**Janine Vance**  
Author,  
"The Search for Mother Missing"

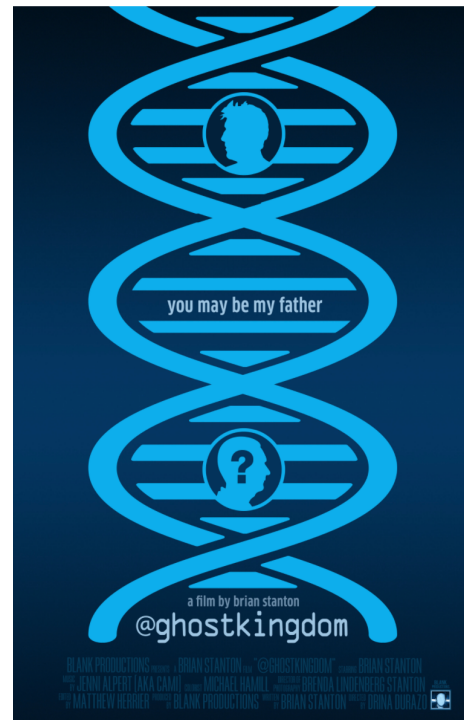


 Concerned United Birthparents' (CUB)  
**2021 Annual Retreat**  
Marina del Rey, CA • October 22 - 24, 2021

# Films

**RECKONING WITH THE PRIMAL WOUND**

reckoningwiththep primalwound.com - Fri. Oct. 23 - 8PM



you may be my father

a film by brian stanton  
@ghostkingdom

atghostkingdom.com - Sat. Oct. 24 - 8PM

# Welcome

## SCHEDULE & INFORMATION



Hospitality Suites were a generous donation in honor and memory of former CUB Board Member Arlene Donovan (13 Jul 1943 - 09 Jan 2021)



**Dr. Tracy Carlis** is a licensed clinical psychologist specializing in the field of adoption for more than 30 years. She has both a private practice in the Calabasas area and also serves as an expert witness for cases in adoptee parricide. She is an adult adoptee who had been in reunion with her first mother for 33 years before her first mother passed away last February, and was reunited with her birthfather just 2 years ago.



**Lesli Johnson** is a licensed Marriage and Family Therapist and Coach specializing in adoption and related issues. Her clients include all members of the adoption and foster care community: adoptees, adoptive parents, birth/first parents, foster parents and families. An adoptee herself, Lesli's personal experience allows her to connect with this community in a unique way. Lesli is a certified EMDR therapist and trained in Brainspotting and the Trauma Resiliency Model. In addition to her work in private practice, Lesli facilitates virtual healing courses, adoption support groups and consults on film, television and creative projects that have adoption related themes.



**Leslie Pate Mackinnon** is a therapist who specializes in issues that impact families conceived through adoption and third-party reproduction. For three decades she's been sharing her expertise on these topics at conferences and events across the country and around the world. Her lived experience is that of a first mother who relinquished two sons for adoption in the mid 1960's and a quarter of a century later, gave birth and raised twins. Her story is included in the book *The Girls Who Went Away* and the documentary *A Girl Like Her*. Leslie was interviewed by Robin Roberts on *Good Morning America*, featured in Dan Rather's report; *Adoption or Abduction* and appeared on *The Katie Couric Show* along with her oldest son. She has also appeared on CNN and is a consultant to those being reunited on TLC's *Long Lost Family*.



**Amy Barker D'Alessandro**, owner of Adoption Savvy, is a Licensed Mental Health Counselor and Clinical Supervisor in Washington state specializing in Adoption & Trauma. She currently works with individuals of all ages, families of all kinds in the adoption community, and regularly facilitates groups and retreats for Adult Adoptees and Birth Mothers. Amy is an Adult Adoptee from a closed domestic adoption in long-term reunion and a Birth Mother of a grown son of an open adoption.



**Eileen McQuade** is a reunited mother who has been active in adoptee reform for twenty years. She will be forever grateful to her daughter Kathleen who found her in 1997 and helped her shed the mantle of secrecy and shame. She is a past president of the American Adoption Congress, a cofounder of Catholic Mothers for Truth & Transparency, and a board member of Access Connecticut.



**Karen Quesnel** began to lend her voice and speak her truth after reuniting with her son Brian in 2017. It has been his love and acceptance, along with the opportunity to testify and advocate for the birth certificate bill in Connecticut that has helped her heal. Karen is a cofounder of Catholic Mothers for Truth & Transparency and is an outspoken advocate for adoptee rights and adoption reform.



**Desiree Stephens** is an adoptee from a closed, domestic adoption (New York, 1985). She has been active in the adoption reform community since 2013 and has served on the board at PACER, in addition to working on various special projects with NJCARE, ALMA, and AAC where she received the Ambassador of the Year Award in 2015. Desiree has been on the board at Access Connecticut since 2017 and is proud to admit her finest hour yet was working with the Catholic Mothers for Truth & Transparency to quell the Catholic Church's authority on the adoptee/mother experience which cleared the way for the Connecticut General Assembly to pass and enact a clean adoptee rights bill in 2021. As a result of that work, she has a newfound interest in exploring the intersectionality between adoptees' rights and women's/mother's rights.

## SCHEDULE

*All sessions in the Del Rey Room unless otherwise noted*

### Thursday Oct. 21st

- 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. National CUB Board Meeting (Tahiti Room)
- 7:30 p.m. – 10:30 p.m. Hospitality Suite:\* Greet, Treats & Drinks (Rm. #322)

### Friday Oct. 22nd

- 7:30 am. – 9:00 a.m. Breakfast
- 9:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m. Welcome & Opening Remarks by CUB President, Deb Myers
- 9:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. *Loss Throughout the Lifespan: Healing Complicated Grief* with Dr. Tracy Carlis, Lesli Johnson, MFT, & Leslie Pate Mackinnon, LCSW
- 12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. Lunch & Free Time
- 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. *The Adoption Closet: The lifelong impact of secrets in families* with Amy Barker D'Alessandro, LMHC
- 4:15 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. Support Groups (Parents: Del Rey / Adoptees: Hearth)
- 6:00 p.m. Hosted Dinner & Special Presentations
- 8:00 p.m. – 9:30 p.m. Film: *Reckoning With The Primal Wound*
- 9:30 p.m. – 10:30 p.m. Hospitality Suite:\* Greet, Treats & Drinks (Rm. #322)

### Saturday Oct. 23rd

- 8:30 am. – 10:00 a.m. Breakfast
- 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. *Harnessing The Power of Mothers: Where do we go from here?* with Eileen McQuade, Karen Quesnel, & Desiree Stephens
- 12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. Lunch & Free Time
- 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. Author Panel with Alicia Lanier ("My Unspeakable Loss"), Dawn Hogan ("Unbroken Bonds"), & Janine Vance ("*The Search for Mother Missing*")
- 4:15 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. Support Groups (Parents: Del Rey / Adoptees: Hearth)
- 6:00 p.m. Hosted Dinner & Special Presentations
- 8:00 p.m. – 9:30 p.m. Film: @ghostkingdom, a film by Brian Stanton
- 9:30 p.m. – 10:30 p.m. Hospitality Suite:\* Greet, Treats & Drinks (Rm. #322)

### Sunday Oct. 24th

- 9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. Hosted Breakfast & Closing Remarks